

## Message Text

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47

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CPR-01 SS-15 NSC-05 ARAE-00

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02

/061 W

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P R 031556Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9536

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT OF SPAIN 1997

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PDEV, PPDC, PSDC, TD, US

SUBJECT: CLARKE SWORN IN AS FIRST PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIC

REF: STATE 189702, STATE 189723, STATE 189708,  
PORT OF SPAIN 1942 (ALL NOTAL)

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. GOVERNOR GENERAL SIR ELLIS CLARKE RELINQUISHED HIS  
KNIGHTLY TITLE AT MIDNIGHT SATURDAY, JULY 31, AND IN  
THE FIRST MOMENTS OF AUGUST 1 WAS SWORN IN AS THE FIRST  
PRESIDENT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO UNDER THE NEW  
REPUBLICAN CONSTITUTION.

2. FESTIVITIES WERE RESTRAINED BUT DIGNIFIED. APPROXI-  
MATELY TWO HUNDRED PROMINENT PERSONALITIES, HIGH  
OFFICIALS AND FOREIGN DIPLOMATS WERE INVITED TO  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE (THE OFFICIAL RESIDENCE). THE FORMAT  
WAS THAT OF AN ELEGANT RECEPTION, ALTHOUGH THE QUEEN'S  
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FULL LENGTH PORTRAIT WAS MISSING FROM ITS PLACE OF

FORMER PROMINENCE. JUST BEFORE MIDNIGHT, THE ARMY BANK PLAYED AULD LANG SYNE, THE UNIFORMED POLICY CONTINGENT SNAPPED TO ONE FINAL "ROYAL SALUTE," AND FOLLOWING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PERSONAL FLAG WAS LOWERED AND THE NEW PRESIDENTIAL FLAG BEARING THE ARMS OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO WAS HOISTED. THE CHIEF JUSTICE THEN ADMINISTERED THE OATH OF OFFICE, APPOINTMENT PAPERS WERE SIGNED, AND A CHAMPAGNE TOAST WAS DRUNK TO THE NEW REPUBLIC.

3. ALTHOUGH KEY ELEMENTS OF THE CEREMONY WERE CARRIED BY BOTH RADIO AND TV (APPARENTLY A LAST-MINUTE CONCESSION), THE OVERALL ATMOSPHERE WAS VERY LOW-KEY AND THERE HAS BEEN SOME GRUMBLING IN THE PRESS AT THE EXCLUSION OF THE "PUBLIC" FROM THIS IMPORTANT EVENT. FOR WHATEVER REASON, THE GOVERNMENT CHOSE NOT TO MAKE NATIONALISTIC CAPITAL OVER THE EVENT AND IT WAS HANDLED AS A ROUTINE BUREACRATIC TRANSITION RATHER THAN A HIGHLY SYMBOLIC SEVERING OF THE TIE TO AN OVERSEAS SOVEREIGN. THE PRESIDENT READ ALOUD A GRACIOUS MESSAGE FROM THE QUEEN FOLLOWING THE OATH. NO OTHER MESSAGES OF CONGRATULATION WERE ANNOUNCED AT THAT TIME.

4. THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER OF CONGRATULATIONS TO PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS AND THE SECRETARY'S MESSAGE TO FOREIGN MINISTER JOSEPH WERE DELIVERED TO THEIR HOMES ON SATURDAY, JULY 31, AND EACH COMMENTED APPRECIATIVELY TO ME AT THE LATER CEREMONIES. I PERSONALLY HANDED THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT CLARKE SHORTLY AFTER HE TOOK THE OATH OF OFFICE. HE WAS MOST APPRECIATIVE AND STATED A REPLY WOULD BE FORTHCOMING.

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5. COMMENT: ON THE BASIS OF THE LOW-KEY CEREMONIES, AND THE ABSENCE OF ANY TOAST TO THE PRESIDENT OR SWEARING OF ALLEGIANCE BY MILITARY CHIEFS, ETC. I CONCLUDE THAT THERE WAS A CONSCIOUS DECISION TO PLAY DOWN THE ROLE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE PRESIDENT AND NOT ELEVATE THE POSITION TO SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE THAN THAT OF THE GOVERNOR GENERAL PREVIOUSLY. THERE HAVE BEEN HINTS OF FURTHER CEREMONIES ON A FORMAL "REPUBLIC DAY" (YET TO BE PROCLAIMED) AFTER THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS. THIS MAY CATER TO THE DEMAND FROM AT LEAST A PORTION OF THE PUBLIC FOR GREATER "PARTICIPATION" IN THIS NATIONAL EVENT. MEANWHILE, THE GOVERNMENT SEEMS MOSTLY CONCERNED TO EMPHASIZE BUSINESS

AS USUAL AND ALLAY FEELINGS IN SOME QUARTERS THAT A  
"REPUBLIC" IMPLIES INSTABILITY AND MILITARY DICTATORSHIP  
A LA LATIN AMERICA.  
RICH

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESIDENT, INAUGURATION, INDEPENDENCE  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 03 AUG 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
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**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** coburnhl  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Document Unique ID:** 00  
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**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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